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The Shortcomings
OF THE
Public School System
Of Athens

E. K. LUMPKIN, JR.,

Chairman Public School Committee of City Council



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Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen of Council and Gentlemen:

We who were sworn in as aldermen on January 1, 1916, took the following oath: "I do solemnly swear that I will well and truly perform the duties of alderman of the city of Athens by adopting and enforcing such measures as shall in my judgment be calculated to promote the general welfare of the city of Athens", etc.

I, as Chairman of the Public School Committee, shortly began a study of the public school systems and school conditions, not only in Athens but in other cities about the size of Athens throughout the south-eastern states. Having found our public school system anything but efficient and up to the standard, I deem it my duty under my oath of office to make this my report to you, Gentlemen, Mr. Mayor and Citizens, of my findings.

Par. 1. Desiring information regarding the schools, and believing the teachers to be the best source from which to secure this information, I mailed to the sixty-two white teachers the following form of questions to be answered and returned to me:

MR. E. K. LUMPKIN, JR.,
Athens, Ga.

Dear Sir:—I am sending you as per your request, answers to the questions you mailed me.

1. Give name in full.
2. Number of years experience in teaching.
3. Number of years actively teaching.
4. Are you a resident and citizen of Athens, Ga.?
5. How long a resident before accepting a position as teacher in public schools of Athens?
6. Former home?
7. How long a resident of former home before coming to Athens?
8. Did you ever teach before accepting a position in the public schools of Athens?
9. If so, number of years?
10. Did you hold the position of teacher in the public school system of Athens for the year 1915-1916?

11. What teachers' preparatory school, or college, did you attend before entering teachers' profession?
12. Did you graduate with diploma?
13. If not, why not?
14. Did you attend any summer school, either University of Georgia Summer School, or any other summer school in the year 1916?
15. If so, number of weeks or months in attendance and on what school?
16. What salary per month do you receive?
17. Do you receive this salary the year round?
18. If not, number of months salary received by you?
19. Do you consider this salary sufficient?
20. If not, please give reason.
21. Are you related by blood or closely related by marriage to any man holding an official position in the city of Athens?
22. If so, please state who and what relationship?
23. Please estimate as accurately as possible the number of indigent children in the grade taught by you?
24. Please give me an expression of your opinion in regard to free books for the white children of Athens, and whether or not in your opinion this would tend to increase the efficiency of the student as a pupil, and also whether or not in your opinion it would increase the efficiency of the public school system as a public school system?
25. From the experience you have had as a teacher and your knowledge of school conditions in general, would in your opinion, the election of some good, substantial, public-spirited lady of Athens to membership on the Board of Education be beneficial? (I ask for a free, frank and full expression of your opinion on this question.)
26. The U. S. Census of 1910 gave the city of Athens a population of 14,915. The city, thru its Mayor and Council, appropriated the sum of \$44,500.00 to maintain the public school system for the year 1916-1917. There are ten schools under the control of the Board of Education; six white and four colored. Total number of pupils enrolled 3303; of which 2220 are white and 1283 colored. There are sixty-two white teachers employed,

twenty-four negro teachers employed. With this information before you please give me the benefit of your experience as a teacher and your general knowledge of school conditions, as to whether or not in your opinion, based on your experience and your general knowledge of school conditions, the city of Athens is getting the best results from the amount of money spent, in view of the fact that the population of the city is only 14,915 according to U. S. Census of 1910. (I wish a full, frank and free expression of your opinion.) And if not, why not?

27. Can you suggest any innovation, either new to the teaching profession or old, but not used in Athens, whereby, the present public school system could be improved?

Twenty-three of the teachers answered my letter, answering from a few to all of the questions. Some evaded the important questions, while others tried to give me the information I asked. One letter received from a teacher, refusing information, is as follows:

"MR. E. K. LUMPKIN, JR.,
Athens, Georgia.

Dear Mr. Lumpkin: Your questionnaire has been received. After due thought I must respectfully refuse to answer in toto for certain of your questions would lead me to air views that I professionally should air only at the bidding of the Board of Education or Superintendent. I hope you will pardon and understand my refusal."

There is nothing to pardon in her refusal and one will understand why she refused. Another letter is as follows:

"MR. E. K. LUMPKIN, JR.,
Athens, Ga.,

Chairman, Public School Committee of Council,

Dear Sir:—In reply to your communication under date of December 1, requesting information concerning the schools, we respectfully refer you to the Board of Education."

This letter was signed by twenty-two of the grammar school teachers, and was mailed to me in one of the

official envelopes of G. G. Bond, Superintendent of City Schools, Athens, Ga., which is quite significant. Indeed, when I learned that on the day this letter was mailed there had been a teachers's meeting of the grammar school teachers in the office of the superintendent, and the twenty-two teachers signing this letter being grammar school teachers and present at this teachers' meeting, I take it that it was signed in the superintendent's office and probably at his request.

One lady tells me in her letter that she can "*air her views*" only at the *bidding or invitation of the Board of Education or Superintendent*. She cannot give information to the *Chairman of the Public School Committee of Council* who is interested in and investigating the system. One cannot help wondering what it is that this teacher *knows* that she is afraid to tell. One fails to see why any teacher should not have answered these questions with propriety unless, it is possible that some of them know of conditions which if they told might mean the loss of their place as teachers.

Par. 2. A "Mother's Club," composed of ladies who had children in one of the schools, was formed to help the teachers with advice as to handling small children, etc. By invitation they met at this School one day to discuss with the teachers why small children are restless, nervous, perhaps bad and hard to control. They, being mothers, were supposed to know: the teachers being single were not expected to know so well. When they had assembled the teachers produced and served ice cream and cake, and proceeded to be hostesses at a party. The mothers had gathered to criticise and advise, there having been a great deal of dissatisfaction, but one cannot criticise one's host you know, so the "party was "a huge success", as stated to me by Supt. Bond in conversation. A few days later several children were withdrawn from this School and sent to private school, showing that some people have a well defined sense of humor.

Par. 3. There are teachers employed in the public school system of Athens who are receiving one-third to one-half more salary than others. Large salaries are paid to a number who have only been teaching one or two years; while others teaching in the schools two

years and upwards are receiving hardly enough to live on. This inequality in the salary seems to be based on whether a teacher belongs to the "Bond Crowd," or "Anti-Bond Crowd." There are more of the latter than one would believe.

Supt. Bond seems to be absolutely controlled and dominated in his official capacity by one or two teachers. This is an open secret among the teachers and a large part of the public. These teachers do as they please, get from Supt. Bond and his special backers in the board just whatever they ask for. They have assistants to do the work largely while they draw the pay. Teachers will tell you, confidentially, as they have me, what they will not tell you for publication if their names are used,—that Supt. Bond is absolutely incompetent, is partial and is given to playing favorites. Here is an apt illustration: A year or more ago an Athens lady applied for a place in the schools. A teacher to be elected is required to be recommended by the Superintendent. Supt. Bond refused to recommend her, altho she had graduated from the public schools, Lucy Cobb Institute and the Georgia Normal & Industrial College at Milledgeville with high honors in her line of work. The Superintendent tried in every way he could to force on the schools a lady *not* a citizen of Athens, who knew absolutely nothing regarding the particular work. The Athens lady has lived here all of her life, her father is a highly respected citizen and has paid hundred and hundreds of dollars to the city in taxes; yet the superintendent fought her election; he refused to recommend her and did what he could to elect the other lady. The system under which the schools are run seems to be honeycombed with favoritism and extravagance.

Par. 4. The members of the Board of Education of Athens are paid \$5.00 to attend monthly meetings. I find the members of the Board of Education of other cities are paid as follows: Columbus, Ga., nothing; Rome, Ga., nothing; Mobile, Ala., nothing; Knoxville, Tenn., nothing, and Spartanburg, S. C., nothing.

The members of the Boards of Education of the above named cities serve for the high honor of being members of the educational boards. I have investigated some of the salaries paid superintendents of schools of other cities and I find as follows:

Spartanburg has a larger population than Athens: the superintendent is paid \$2200.00. Rome is about the size of Athens: the superintendent is paid \$2100.00. Anniston, Ala., is about the size of Athens, and pays \$2100.00.

All seem to have modern and up-to-date systems. Athens pays \$2400.00 salary to the superintendent, and it seems gets less efficiency for the money spent than other cities.

Par. 5. Anniston, Ala., about the size of Athens in population appropriated in 1916 for the year of 1916 1917 the sum of \$26,000.00 to maintain its public school system.

Rome appropriated and spent on her public schools for 1915-1916:

RECEIPTS

City of Rome	\$25,000.00
State of Georgia	10,995 52
Non-resident tuitions	2,482.64
	<u>\$38,478.16</u>

EXPENDITURES 1914-1915 1915-1916

Salaries	\$33,745 44	\$34,346 28
Fuel	685.96	673.15
Repairs	1,646 95	815.33
Supplies	729.72	727.60
Insurance	370.22	246.40
Furniture	1,183.01	384 83
Miscellaneous	223.25	122 86
Rent	304 00	256.67
Telephone	64.00	64 00
Other items	56.35	302 88
	<u>\$38,988.90</u>	<u>\$37,910.10</u>

Total expenditures.....\$38,988.90 \$37,910.10

Money for Athens Public Schools is mainly raised by a direct tax of one-half of one per cent on all property.

RECEIPTS—ATHENS 1915-1916

City of Athens (5 mills tax rate)	\$44,500.00
State of Georgia	17,826.00
Tuition	1,321.25
Miscellaneous	7.75
	<u>\$63,655 60</u>

Total revenue\$63,655 60

EXPENDITURES 1915-1916

Deficit July 15	\$ 375.85
Salary account	52,713.87
Janitor "	2,096.60
Repair "	1,987.66
Supplies "	999.43
Fuel and Light	1,589 62
Printing and advertising account.	127.35
Furniture and equipment "	988.40
Miscellaneous and incidental	499.16
Library account	181.02
Rent	835.16
Interest and discount	1,093.00
Balance July, 1916	.48

Total expenditures.....\$63,713.60

Athens has a few more teachers and pupils than has Anniston and Rome: but Rome spends only \$37,910.10 while Athens spends \$63,713.60, or, Athens spends \$25,807.50 more than Rome and \$37,718.60 more than Anniston. Both of these cities seem to have just as good school systems, if not better, than the Athens school system. One fails to see why the very great difference in the amount of money spent. In a conversation with Supt. Bond several months ago, in his office, I asked him the reason of the difference. He stated that it was a difference in the Anniston, Rome and Athens systems of "book-keeping".

Par. 6. In 1913, the trustees of the Athens Female Academy turned over to the Board of Education the Meigs street school lot. At that time, the schools were in a fairly good shape, while to-day some grades are overcrowded and the buildings badly in need of repair. This is especially true of two grades at Baxter Street school, and the entire school building on Nantahala Ave. The Board of Education decided to sell the Meigs Street property and build an absolutely useless gymnasium on the high school lot with the money.

The Board of Education thru its President came before Council and stated "That individual members are going to give the difference in the price brought by the Meigs Street School lot and the contract price of the gymnasium (it cost \$6500.00), that the teachers would

give their time as directors to the gymnasium this year free of costs." When the President was asked by a member of the Council whether the city would be required to maintain this gymnasium after this year he stated he did not know—one can draw their own conclusions. Next year, and in years to come, the tax payers will pay a good fat salary to a physical director for the boys and one for the girls; also, they will pay the insurance, lights, water, and janitor bills, amounting to several thousand a year and give some man or lady a fat salary. We have a modern and up-to-date Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., built by public subscription; yet the Board of Education is forcing the City to compete with these two institutions.

Do they believe the school children living in East Athens are going to walk a mile and a half to use the gymnasium? Or that the children living around Baxter Street School, or College Avenue School are going to walk a mile to use this gymnasium? Or that the school children living around the Southern Mill are going to come this distance to use this gymnasium?

Children living in East Athens and around the Southern Mills who do not have, perhaps, as expensive clothes as most of the High School children are not going to use the gymnasium to be laughed at and made fun of. This gymnasium is useless, is not needed, and is nothing less than extravagance to build and maintain it.

The members of the Council have stated they are opposed to it, as everyone else who has an inside knowledge of present conditions of the public school system. However, the Board is "all powerful", has long done as it pleased and very probably will continue to do as it pleases unless curbed by legislative enactment. While they are uselessly wasting this money building and maintaining a gymnasium, I wish to quote to you from the Athens City School Annual, 1915-1916, (official book of the Board of Education and Superintendent), quoting from the report of Supt. Bond to the Board, page 11, as follows:

"The table of statistics just read to you shows that the total enrollment of 3503 is 73 less than the enrollment of last year. This is explained by the fact that we were in some instances, especially in the case of the Nantahala

Day School, unable to accommodate all of the pupils that applied for admission *without overcrowding some grades beyond the danger point. There were twenty five applicants in this school alone for whom we could not provide places*!"

Baxter Street school has two school rooms in the shape of an elbow or "L". The children at one end of the room cannot see the teacher at the other. The East Athens Public School badly needs improvement as do other school buildings; and Gentlemen of the Council, Mr. Mayor and Citizens, the public school building on Nantahala avenue is unfit for a dog that a man prizes highly to sleep in. It is a fire trap of the worst kind, a mere shack, very poorly built. When I visited this school I found conditions as follows: First and Second grade room, ceiling cracked, bulged downward and loosened. There was a place about two feet square where the plastering had fallen. The walls were discolored, the floor had sunken in in some places, and in others the baseboards had pulled from the walls. This room was about 25 x 25 square and had only four very small electric lights to lighten the room which is totally insufficient. Third and Fourth grades room, ceiling in the room was broken, bulged downward and badly cracked, walls discolored; there were two very large places over the children's desk where the plastering had fallen. This room was a little larger than the First and Second grades' room, and only four small electric lights to lighten this very large room. In the Fifth and Sixth grades' room, the ceiling end walls were in worse shape, if such a thing is possible, than in the other room, the ceiling being cracked, loose and broken, and only three electric lights to lighten this one. I went down into the basement into the Kindergarten. The walls were very much discolored, and being in the basement it is damp when it rains; while there I found the walls to be very damp and beginning to fall in places. Only three small electric lights for this large room. School is taught in this building at night, this being the Nantahala Day and Night School for the people of the Southern Manufacturing Company. This building is not fit for human beings to stay in. There is absolutely no fire protection, no fire extinguishers, the teachers are doing wonderful work, however, with the exceedingly poor equipment that they are supplied with.

The Southern Manufacturing Company, in accordance with a section of the State Child Labor Law, requiring a certain amount of schooling for children working in a cotton mill, built a school house on Nantahala Avenue for the children working in the mill. On September 27, 1913, this building was unloaded on the city of Athens for a public school, thereby relieving the Company of the expenses of water, lights, salaries of teachers, janitors and insurance. A successful contractor of Athens stated to me that this school building was built at a period when lumber, and materials, etc., were considerably cheaper than to-day; and yet he states that this same building could be built as it stands, even with the advance in prices, for between \$1750.00 and \$2,000.00. The lot on which the building stands did not cost exceeding \$1,000.00, and probably about \$700.00. The Southern Manufacturing Company sold this property to the city for \$4,500.00; thereby making a profit of not less than \$1,500.00 and very probably more on the deal, and in addition relieving the Southern Manufacturing Company of the expense of salaries for teachers, etc.—a very fine “business deal” for the Company, and an exceedingly poor one for the City.

“No room in some schools unless crowded beyond the danger point”, quoting the school superintendent’s report to the Board. Build and maintain your gymnasium, Gentlemen of the Board, as a monument to folly and extravagance, and when one of the overcrowded school buildings catches on fire and burns scores of little tots and larger children you will cover your eyes with your hands and say, “we did not know conditions”. Some members of Board of Education and Superintendent seem to care for nothing but adding new and useless departments with fat salaries, and recklessly spending money that they do not have to raise, but which the Mayor and Council have to raise by taxing the already heavily taxed people.

The tax rate on property, both real and personal in Athens is to-day \$1.50 on the hundred dollars of valuation. This is very high and is very largely caused, as you can readily understand, from the extravagance and waste I have shown you. Our country is in a world war and already a bond issue of seven billions—not millions of dollars, has been authorized and being

floated, and with more issues to follow, which means tremendously increased taxation added to the already terribly heavy load. Yet the wasteful extravagance of the people’s hard earned money continues.

You have been told so often, Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen of Council and Citizens, what an efficient and up-to-date public school system we have that you never question the statement. Now let us see what we really have. Quoting from the Athens City School Annual, 1915-1916, on pages 14-15, report of Supt. Bond to the Board of Education as follows.

“Of the 1560 pupils enrolled in the white day schools, omitting the High School, there are 398 with conditions ranging from total failure to failure in one subject; of this 211 pupils have failed in one or two subjects and will be passed with these conditions if necessary next Fall. 187 have failed in three or four subjects.” Twenty-five per cent of the white school children, omitting the High School have failed in from one to all of their studies. Thirteen per cent have failed in one or two subjects; and over ten per cent have failed in three or more subjects. This is the boasted efficiency, Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen of Council and Citizens, of our public school system; efficiency the Citizens can be well “proud of”.

Last year, in the graduating class of the High School there were 46 pupils. Of this number nine failed to get diplomas; a 19½ per cent failure to get diplomas in the graduating class. Let us see what other cities are doing in their schools. Norfolk, Va. had 110 in the graduating class; five failed to graduate, a .045 per cent failure. Columbus, Ga. had 96 in the graduating class and none failed to graduate. Mobile, Ala., had 104 and only 2 failed to graduate, a .019 per cent failure. Spartanburg, S. C., had 47, and only 2 failed to graduate. Yet Athens with her “magnificent” and “efficient” school system has *nine* to fail to graduate out of a class of 46, a 19½ per cent failure. My, My, My! and they call *this* efficiency. Do you thoroughly understand *now* why so many teachers refused to answer my questions or give me any information, when they knew these conditions? So I was forced to dig it up, without help, to give you, Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen of Council and Citi-

zens—this information in this, my report, to you on your public school system.

The cost of maintaining the public school systems of Rome, Anniston, Spartanburg and Athens, based on the cost per pupil enrolled in the schools, is as follows: The yearly per capita cost for the city of Rome is \$12.47 per child; Anniston cost per child is \$13.74; Spartanburg, S. C. (with 1400 children more than Athens enrolled) is \$15.83 per child enrolled in the schools; while the per capita cost of pupils enrolled in the public schools of Athens is \$18.18. Quite a difference, is it not? And yet, last year there was a 25 per cent failure in the schools of Athens.

I was somewhat amazed at the figures above, so I decided to see what the average cost per citizen was to maintain the public schools. This calculation is based on the total population under the United States Census, each white man, white woman and child; negro man, woman and child. In other words the total population was taken to get the average. I find that it cost an average of \$2.01 for every person of Anniston to support their public school system; and I find that it cost an average of \$2.65 for every person of Rome to support their public school system; that it cost an average of \$4.25 for every person of Spartanburg to support their public school system; and I find that the cost to maintain the public school system of Athens to be \$4.27. Athens is higher in cost than Anniston, also Rome, and she is 2c higher in cost per citizen than Spartanburg. These figures are startling when we know that Spartanburg had 3300 population more than Athens under the United States Census. I have compared these various school systems from the point of expense per child, and an average per citizen and without an exception Athens ranks considerably ahead in expense; and yet the efficiency of Athens seems to be considerably lower than the efficiency of these other public school systems.

The children in the grammar grades at the beginning of each school year are required to bring forty or fifty cents to school. This amount is supposed to supply the pupils for the year with pencils, tablets and equipment of like character. However, it seems to be the almost daily statement of the pupil to the parent—'Teacher says I must bring a dime for this, or a quarter for that;

or I must have this article and it costs fifty cents'. While I am on this subject, I decided to see how many new books the Superintendent had forced the parents to buy this year which were not used last year and the cost. I have never seen the wisdom of using a book this year and changing for a new one next year. I do not believe that a school book becomes antiquated in a year. I find that for the school year of 1916-1917, there were the following changes in books over the year 1915-1916.

PRIMARY & GRAMMAR GRADES.

Gulicks Emergencies, Ginn & Co	40
Tarr & McMurray, Book 1. McMillian Co	65
Tarr & McMurray, Book 2. McMillian Co	1.10
Webster's Shorter School Dictionary.	
(American Book Co.)	60
The Story of Old Europe and Young America.	
(Rand-McNally Co.)	65

HIGH SCHOOL.

Clark's Introduction to Science, American Book Co.	1.00
Halleck's New English Literature " " "	1.30
Smith's Latin Book, Allyn & Baxon	1.00
Robinson & Breasted Outlines of European History	
Part 1. (Ginn & Co.)	1.50
Robinson & Breasted Outlines of European History	
Part 2. (Ginn & Co.)	1.50
American History, D. C. Heath & Co	1.50
Second year Mathematics, Univ. of Chicago Press	1.00

This seems to put a very unnecessary expense and burden on parents having children in our schools.

Parents whose children go thru the public school, usually have a well stocked second hand library of school books that are absolutely useless, the superintendent being directly responsible for this condition and useless expense to the parents, as he makes a list of books to be used each year, this list being quite naturally perhaps, ratified by the Board or a committee of the Board. While on this phase I would like to ask what has become of the child who used to learn his lessons in school—to learn being the purpose of sending him to school. But under our system the father comes home tired at night from his work, the mother is worn

out from her household duties; still one, or both must *teach* the children in the home at night, thus having to do the work of the school, and when the pupil goes to school the next day he or she *merely recites* to the teacher. Another instance of our "progressive" system.

Here let me tell you of one instance of the great efficiency of our system of my own knowledge. In 1915 a Mr. Austin was a male teacher in the Athens High School. The children did practically as they pleased in his classroom, especially the boys, and learned little or nothing. He could not control them. Finally after incessant complaints by the mothers, a committee of the Board, with the Superintendent, investigated this condition, and took the matter up with Mr. Austin. He stated frankly that on account of certain personal matters he knew he was not giving the service he should, but if they would keep him for the next year he would do better. Instead of improving, conditions in his class grew worse, until he finally was allowed to resign.

I was prepared to find most anything during my investigation of the school system. However, I did not believe that even the Superintendent would go to the extremes as he did in the following instances: A negro woman named Louise Green was a teacher in the negro public school in 1915. From September 1, she was in and out, teaching one day and out sick the next. I am informed she had a hollow, hoarse, racking cough with all the looks and symptoms of consumption, yet this woman was allowed to teach from September 1st, 1915 to the latter part of November, 1915, when her physical condition became such that she voluntarily gave up her grade in the school. She died February 10, from consumption. This teacher had been shut up in a closed and heated room from September 1 to the latter part of November, the negro pupils in her grade handling the same books, chalk, erasers and coming in personal contact with her. After school hours they went to their homes, carrying the germs of this terrible disease where the clothes of the white people were for washing and ironing. The mothers and sisters of these negro pupils were wash-women, maids and cooks in our homes, handling the clothes that we wore and the provisions that we ate. The father was your butler, houseman, or driver of wagons delivering groceries that we ate. Yet

this woman was allowed to teach, scattering broadcast germs of tuberculosis with the undoubted knowledge of the Superintendent. Another instance, a negro woman, named Mattie Hill, was a teacher in the negro public schools. She became sick with all symptoms of tuberculosis. One of the prominent white doctors of Athens attended her. Her condition became such that she was forced to give up her grade and go to the tuberculosis camp of North Carolina, and there she stayed a year, and then she returned. When this prominent white doctor found that she had returned and taken her grade back in school, he went, as he stated to me, to Supt. Bond, telling him that this woman had tuberculosis. Yet she was allowed by him to teach a full school year after her return until her condition became such that she was forced to leave for the second time to go to North Carolina. It is almost inconceivable to me that these conditions were allowed to exist with the knowledge of the Superintendent.

This prominent white doctor is very positive in a statement to me that he personally told the Superintendent that this woman had tuberculosis before he allowed her to return and to teach the full year after being warned that she was suffering with this terrible disease. I must acknowledge that I was not prepared to find conditions such as these existing. I will give any one the name of this doctor that he may talk to him personally should he desire.

The time has arrived to save our schools from extravagance, politics and favoritism. At present the school system is inefficient, is slowly dying of dry rot, and unless something is done soon the body politic is going to suffer immeasurable harm and damage, as education is the foundation on which our civilization is built. On May 13, one of the greatest preachers Athens has ever been blessed with, in referring to the national government, said, "After every presidential election some hundred thousand or more men bearing petitions, invade Washington looking for sinecures—"easy jobs" their idea being that it is a government by politician, of the politician, for the politician." This has been the trouble with our schools, to a considerable extent.

In gathering this information relating to our school system I have written numerous letters, both to local

people and to men connected with the public school system of other cities.

Therefore, I was not at all surprised when several weeks ago one of the "Big Politicians" met me on the streets and during the course of our conversation stated that he heard that I was investigating our public school system; "he sincerely hoped that I would not cause public dissatisfaction with our schools; also he assured me of his friendly interest in my welfare and wanted to warn me to be careful as to what I did and said, otherwise he thought it would cause me to be defeated for re-election as alderman, as had been one other alderman who started this investigation in 1915, but had never completed it." I courteously thanked him and we parted.

Mr. Mayor, Gentlemen of Council and Citizens of Athens, I ran for Alderman on an independent platform. I did not allign myself with any political faction during my race, nor have I lined up with any faction in council during my term. I am independent today and will remain independent as long as I am in office. No man has dictated to me and I shall allow no man to dictate to me in regard to my official duties. I have found these conditions, and believe it to be my duty under my oath of office to report them. I am trying to take the control of our schools away from the politicians who have dominated and controlled it for years, and to restore control of our schools to the people where it rightfully belongs. I expect to continue my efforts as long as I am a public officer.

No man ever accomplished a reform, great or small, without opposition, and without being criticised and fought, but in a good cause as this is, one can endure it.

Very probably articles in the newspaper signed "Citizen" or "Tax-Payer", or other such names, will appear condemning me for my efforts. However, do not be misled, but keep in mind always the above facts, and among other things the report of the Superintendent to the Board of City School Annual, 1915 1916, pages 11, 14 and 15 above quoted from and how this report is explained.

Let them deny all they please, but no one can deny successfully his written report. I am not suggesting an investigation by the Board of Education, nor by the

Mayor and Council, but I am giving the facts, found by my investigation, for the benefit of the latter and that of the suffering public and people who bear the burden. If the people are satisfied with the way the schools have been and are managed at present, then I am satisfied and will discontinue my efforts. However, if they are not, and will join the fight for better schools, more schools, the elimination of favoritism, politics and extravagance, I will be glad to aid in every way I can until we gain our desire. I do not believe the school conditions as they are at present to be due to the inefficiency of the teaching force, for with few exceptions we seem to have an excellent corps of teachers, but to an antiquated system and more or less inefficiency in the office of Superintendent. In this connection please allow me to suggest for your serious consideration the following:

1. That a bill be introduced in the legislature abolishing the present Board of eleven members as it stands, it being entirely too large and cumbersome.

2. That a bill be introduced in the legislature to create a Board of Commissioners of Education to be composed of not less than three or more than five members to be elected from the city at large without regard to ward lines.

3. That provision be made for one, or more, of the good substantial ladies of the city for membership on this new Board. In this connection, allow me to suggest the names of a few ladies eminently qualified, that occur to me at the moment; there are many others likewise qualified:

Miss Louie Lane, Mrs. Ida Davison, Mrs. Josh Hutchins, Miss Millie Rutherford, Mrs. Clara Barrow, Mrs. Fred L. Davis, Mrs. Geo. Hulme, Mrs. Hope Green, Miss Susie Gerdine, Mrs. James Payne, Mrs. R. C. Orr, Mrs. A. S. Parker, Mrs. D. L. Earnest and Mrs. J. J. Strickland.

Any of the above named ladies would be a distinct credit to the Educational Board. I firmly believe that with one or more of them serving, politics, favoritism and extravagance would immediately disappear. The good women of Athens are entitled to at least one

membership on the Board, as it is the mother who always makes the sacrifice in the home to give her child an education and she ought to have at least a voice in the government of the schools.

4. That the new Board be required to furnish free school books to the white children. There are a large number of boys and girls, children of poor parents, who are unable to attend school for want of funds to purchase the high priced books.

5. I suggest to those citizens who may agree with me in these views to see either in person or write our representatives from Clarke County and Senator to the next legislature, requesting that a bill incorporating the above be introduced by them and passed.

Respectfully,

EDWIN K. LUMPKIN, JR.,

Chairman Public School Committee, Mayor and Council.



